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This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A process for producing plastic/wood fiber composite foamed structures comprising the steps of:

pre-drying wood fiber filler having a degradation temperature and an active volatilization temperature and maintaining the pre-drying temperature below the degradation temperature to produce dried wood fiber filler;

mixing the dried wood fiber filler with plastic to produce a plastic/wood fiber mixture and maintaining the mixing temperature below the active volatilizing temperature;

feeding the plastic/wood fiber mixture into an extruder and maintaining the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber mixture below the active volatilizing temperature;

introducing a blowing agent into the plastic/wood fiber mixture and mixing it therewith to produce a plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture and maintaining the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture below the active volatilizing temperature;

subjecting the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture to high shear forces in the presence of high pressures and maintaining the a processing temperature below the active volatilizing temperature; and

extruding the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture to produce a plastic/wood fiber composite foamed structure and maintaining the temperature of the plastic/wood

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fiber/gas mixture below the active volatilizing temperature.

2. (original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the pre-drying temperature is between the active volatilization temperature and the degradation temperature.
3. (original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the pre-drying temperature is below 180°C.
4. (original) A process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the mixing temperature is below 170°C.
5. (original) A process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the processing temperature is below 170°C.
6. (original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the mixing temperature is below 170°C.
7. (original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the processing temperature is below 170°C.
8. (cancelled)

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9. (original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the blowing agent is a physical blowing agent.
10. (previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 9 wherein the physical blowing agent is selected from the group consisting of non-reactive gases CO₂, N₂, He, Ar, Air, and mixtures thereof.
11. (original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the blowing agent is a chemical blowing agent.
12. (cancelled)
13. (original) A process as claimed in claim 5 wherein the blowing agent is a physical blowing agent.
14. (previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 13 wherein the physical blowing agent is selected from the group consisting non-reactive gases CO₂, N₂, He, Ar, Air, and mixtures thereof.
15. (original) A process as claimed in claim 5 wherein the blowing agent is a chemical blowing agent.
16. (original) A process as claimed in claim 1 further including the step of reducing

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the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture prior to the step of extruding thereby stabilizing the cell structure in the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture.

17. (original) A process as claimed in claim 16 wherein the temperature is reduced in one of a cooling extruder and a heat exchanger.

18. (original) A process as claimed in claim 5 further including the step of reducing the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture prior to the step of extruding thereby stabilizing the cell structure in the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture.

19. (original) A process as claimed in claim 18 wherein the temperature is reduced in one of a cooling extruder and a heat exchanger.

20. (original) A process as claimed in claim 8 further including the step of reducing the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture prior to the step of extruding thereby stabilizing the cell structure in the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture.

21. (original) A process as claimed in claim 20 wherein the temperature is reduced in one of a cooling extruder and a heat exchanger.

22. (original) A process as claimed in claim 9 further including the step of reducing the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture prior to the step of extruding thereby stabilizing the cell structure in the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture.

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23. (original) A process as claimed in claim 22 wherein the temperature is reduced in one of a cooling extruder and a heat exchanger.
24. (original) A process as claimed in claim 11 further including the step of reducing the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture prior to the step of extruding thereby stabilizing the cell structure in the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture.
25. (original) A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein the temperature is reduced in one of a cooling extruder and a heat exchanger.
26. (cancelled)
27. (cancelled)
28. (cancelled)
29. (cancelled)
30. (cancelled)
31. (cancelled)
32. (cancelled)

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33. (cancelled)

34. (cancelled)

35. (cancelled)

36. (cancelled)

37. (cancelled)

38. (cancelled)

39. (cancelled)

40. (cancelled)

41. (cancelled)

42. (cancelled)

43. (cancelled)

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44. (cancelled)

45. (cancelled)

46. (original) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the extruder is one of a twin screw extruder and a single screw extruder.

47. (original) A process as claimed in claim 5 wherein the extruder is one of a twin screw extruder and a single screw extruder.

48. (cancelled)

49. (original) A process as claimed in claim 9 wherein the extruder is one of a twin screw extruder and a single screw extruder.

50. (original) A process as claimed in claim 11 wherein the extruder is one of a twin screw extruder and a single screw extruder.

51. (original) A process as claimed in claim 16 wherein the extruder is one of a twin screw extruder and a single screw extruder.

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52. (original) A process as claimed in claim 18 wherein the extruder is one of a twin screw extruder and a single screw extruder.

53. (original) A process as claimed in claim 20 wherein the extruder is one of a twin screw extruder and a single screw extruder.

54. (original) A process as claimed in claim 22 wherein the extruder is one of a twin screw extruder and a single screw extruder.

55. (original) A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein the extruder is one of a twin screw extruder and a single screw extruder.

56. (cancelled)

57. (cancelled)

58. (cancelled)

59. (cancelled)

60. (cancelled)

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61. (cancelled)

62. (cancelled)

63. (cancelled)

64. (cancelled)

65. (cancelled)

66. (currently amended) A process for producing plastic/wood fiber composite foamed structures comprising the steps of:

pre-drying wood fiber filler to produce dried wood fiber filler;

mixing the dried wood fiber filler with plastic to produce a plastic/wood fiber mixture and maintaining the mixing temperature below the active volatilizing temperature;

feeding the plastic/wood fiber mixture into an extruder and maintaining the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber mixture below the active volatilizing temperature;

mixing a physical blowing agent into the plastic/wood fiber mixture to produce a plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture and maintaining the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture below the active volatilizing temperature;

subjecting the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture to high shear forces in the presence

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of high pressures and maintaining a processing temperature below the active volatilizing temperature; and

extruding the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture to produce a plastic/wood fiber composite foamed structure and maintaining the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture below the active volatilizing temperature.

67. (original) A process as claimed in claim 66 further including the step of reducing the temperature of the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture prior to the step of extruding thereby stabilizing the cell structure in the plastic/wood fiber/gas mixture.

68. (previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 67 wherein the physical blowing agent is selected from the group consisting of CO₂ and N₂.